

## NEBRASKA LIBRARY COMMISSION

Lincoln, NE

July 14, 2023

### MINUTES

The Nebraska Library Commission met on July 14, 2023. The meeting notice was posted on the Commission website and the Nebraska.gov public meeting calendar.

Commission members present: Tiffany Carter, Vernon J., Beth Kabes, and Arun Pondicherry; via GoToMeeting: Diane Downer and Lois Todd-Meyer. Staff present: Rod Wagner, Jennifer Wrampe; via GoToMeeting: Christa Porter.

Arun Pondicherry called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. This meeting complies with the Nebraska Open Meetings Act and Governor's Executive Order Limited Waiver for Public Meetings.

**Approval of Agenda:** A motion was made by Beth Kabes and seconded by Arun Pondicherry to approve the agenda. Motion carried on roll call vote: Tiffany Carter – aye; Diane Downer – aye; Vernon J. – aye; Beth Kabes - aye; Arun Pondicherry – aye; Lois Todd-Meyer - aye. Motion approved.

**Approval of Minutes:** (May 12, 2023) a motion was made by Vernon J. and seconded by Tiffany Carter to approve the minutes as amended. Motion carried on roll call vote: Tiffany Carter – aye; Diane Downer – aye; Vernon J. – aye; Beth Kabes - aye; Arun Pondicherry – aye; Lois Todd-Meyer – aye. Motion approved.

### Chair's Report and Commissioner's Comments

**Arun Pondicherry** – no report

**Vernon J.** – reported the Do Space building has been torn down in preparation for construction of the new Omaha Central Library.

**Beth Kabes** – no report

**Tiffany Carter** – no report

**Diane Downer** – no report

**Lois Todd-Meyer** – no report

### Director's Report

*Personnel* – Rod Wagner expressed appreciation to staff members for their work managing the ARPA and Cares Act grant funds. Sam Shaw, Christa Porter, Sally Snyder, and Jerry Breazile were the primary staff members working with these funds. The Institute of Museum and Library Services approved the Library Commission’s annual State Program Report. The report included the additional ARPA funds administered as part of the LSTA Grants to States program. The ARPA funds resulted in over 400 individual sub-grant reports being submitted as part of the state report.

*E-Rate Library Broadband Initiatives* – Christa Porter reported USAC is up to the 11<sup>th</sup> wave of approvals for libraries and schools applications. For Nebraska, 64 libraries out of 67 total applicants have been approved totaling \$254,711 in discounts. The Nebraska Public Service Commission was allotted a \$1 million matching fund for fiber construction for schools and libraries with funds available over a four year period. Several months ago, the PSC issued an order to seek comments for consideration in extending the program beyond four years and to have funds cover other costs in addition to construction.

*Digital Equity Planning Grant* – Wagner reported the Nebraska Broadband Office that was started under Governor Pillen has appointed Patrick Haggerty as the new director.

*Public Library Accreditation* – Porter reported on the Public Library Accreditation program. Accreditation happens annually. Libraries need to meet program criteria to become or remain accredited. Libraries are eligible for state aid funding and are eligible for grants if they are accredited. The process opens on July 1. This year, 40 libraries are up for reaccreditation and 44 unaccredited libraries were invited to apply. Unaccredited libraries that are invited are ones that have submitted the annual public library survey. Porter said that reaccreditation is on a five-year cycle. Library boards and library directors must be certified for accreditation.

*Regional Library Systems* – Wagner reported that new contracts have been arranged with the regional library systems starting July 1 and continuing through June 30, 2025. Central Plains Library System’s annual meeting is being held today at Cozad Public Library. Western Library System’s annual meeting will be held on August 1 in Bayard. Three Rivers Library System will hold its annual meeting on August 4 in Genoa.

*Nebraska Center for the Book* – Wagner reported that the National Book Festival will be held August 12 in Washington, D.C. Library Commission staff Tessa Terry and Gabe Kramer will host the Nebraska exhibit at the festival. They will be assisted by two Nebraska Center for the Book board members – MeMe Smith and Katie Bean. Nebraska Book Awards deadline was June 30 with 62 entries submitted. The deadline for One Book One Nebraska 2024 nominations was June 15 with 30 books nominated. Book Award winners will be announced at the Celebration of Nebraska Books on October 14.

*State Legislation Status* – Wagner reported that LB441, which would repeal the exemption from prosecution for those in educational institutions providing obscenity to minors in grades K-12, did not advance from the legislature’s judiciary committee and will carry over to the 2024 legislative session. LB 635, relating to online databases that are provided by schools, libraries and the Library Commission, did not advance from the education committee and will carry over to the 2024 legislative session. State appropriations for the Library Commission remained the same as recommended by the legislature’s appropriations committee. The Library Commission’s state funding increased by 4.4% for FY 2024 and 3.2% for FY 2025.

## **Financial Report**

*June Financial Report* – Wagner reported that state funds were 98% expended as of June 30. Expenditures do not include encumbrances that will be paid out of the remaining state funds. The federal fiscal year ends September 30. Expenditures at this time are within budget. Funds received through the LSTA Grants to States program have a two-year period for expenditure.

*LSTA Appropriations Outlook*- Wagner said that it is unlikely that Congress will adopt a federal budget by the start of the new federal fiscal year beginning October 1. Congress will likely appropriate funds through a continuing resolution for a specified period. A significant issue is whether Congress will appropriate funding in line with current year appropriation levels or at FY 2021 levels. Nebraska's LSTA grant this year was \$183, 000 above the prior year, reverting to 2021 levels would mean a loss of that increase.

## **New Business**

*2023-2024 State Employee Pay Policies* - Wagner reported that most state employees received a 5% pay increase on July 1. Agency directors and other non-classified personnel are not included in the July 1 pay change; their governing bodies determine their pay. Wagner requested a 5% pay raise.

A motion was made by Lois Todd-Meyer and seconded by Vernon J. to approve the salary increase. Motion carried on roll call vote: Tiffany Carter – aye; Diane Downer – aye; Vernon J. – aye; Beth Kabes - aye; Arun Pondicherry – aye; Lois Todd-Meyer - aye. Motion approved.

*Next Meeting Dates* –September 8, November (TBD)

## **Adjournment**

Arun Pondicherry adjourned the meeting.

Jennifer Wrampe